

Art, architecture, museums and more...



© Alexandre Julien

"The Bon Bini Festival showcasing local culture takes place every Tuesday evening."

Visitors to Aruba are not only treated to glimpses of Aruba's culture in downtown Oranjestad but also right at their resorts.

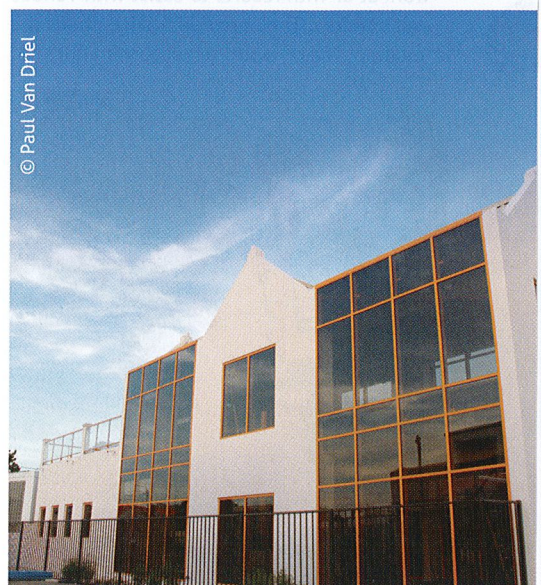
Local artwork graces the walls of many hotel lobbies; some resorts even have their own art galleries with changing expositions. On special theme nights, there are Carnival shows with exuberant music and colorful sequined and feathered costumes as well as other local and Caribbean entertainment.

For music enthusiasts, a unique **Musical Morning** takes place on the last Sunday of every month from 11am – 1pm at the French Steak House at the Manchebo Beach Resort. Local musical artists provide entertaining performances of jazz, classical, folkloric and classic Antillean music.

There are two exciting weekly festivals not to be missed. The **Bon Bini Festival** showcasing local culture takes place every Tuesday evening in the outdoor courtyard of historic Fort Zoutman, Aruba's oldest building, in downtown Oranjestad. The **Caribbean Festival** celebrating the island's multi-cultural

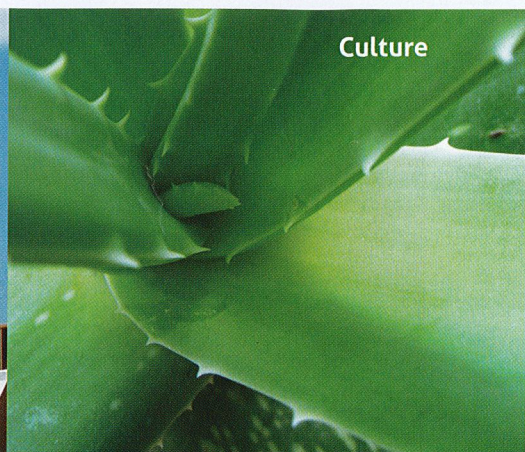
heritage takes place every Thursday evening in San Nicolas. More information about these events is found in the *Happenings* section of this magazine.

Housed in a historic building complex in downtown Oranjestad, the **Museo Archeologico** is a state-of-the-art 21st century museum of Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. The oldest part is a *cunucu* house built in 1870 by the grandparents of Boy Ecury, a young Aruban hero of World War II who lived in the house from 1922 – 1937. Of special interest is the cistern used by the

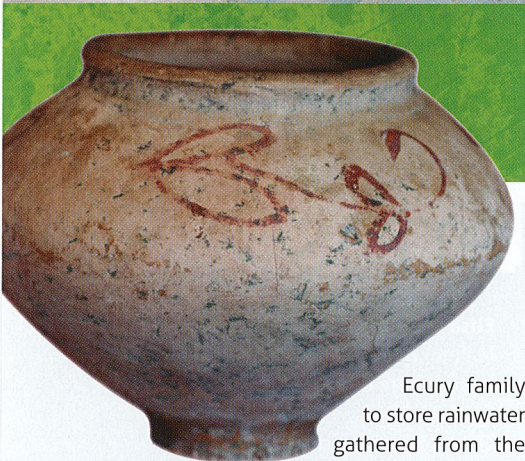


© Paul Van Driel

Top: Painting by local artist Elvis Tromp.
Above left: Dancers at the Bon Bini Festival.
Right: The Museo Archeologico.



"The story of aloe is told on a tour of the modern state-of-the-art aloe factory."



Above: The Ecury complex in Oranjestad.
Above right: The Aloe plant.
Left: An item on display at the Museo Historico, Fort Zoutman.
Right: The green stadhuis, now housing the City Hall.

Ecury family to store rainwater gathered from the roof. The newest

portion is a large mansion built in 1929.

The modern two-story building houses the areas devoted to Amerindian culture and archaeological finds from various digs around Aruba. The three periods of Amerindian habitation are documented: Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC–1000 AD when semi-nomadic bands of Amerindians migrated from the South or Central American mainland; Ceramic Period of the Caquetio Indians, the hunters-fishers-gatherers who inhabited Aruba from 900 – 1515 AD until enslaved and taken to Hispaniola; and the Historic Period from 1515 – 1880 AD. Much can be learned from the Amerindian ornaments, shells, ceramics, amulets and burial practices. The daily routines of these island dwellers come alive through interactive technology; there is a built-to-scale *maloca* hut dating back 1000 years.

Aruba's economy was once dependent upon aloe, with one-third of its land covered by plantations. The **Aloe Museum** located at the Hato Plantation that dates back to 1890 is a national depository for ancient aloe tools and equipment with a complete library on the history, manufacture and qualities of aloe vera. The story of aloe is told on a tour of the modern state-of-the-art aloe factory.

The **Museo Historico** is proudly positioned between two of Aruba's oldest monuments, Fort Zoutman and the Willem III Tower. The collection consists of artifacts acquired since its opening in 1983. There are audio-visual programs on various topics related to Aruba's history and a permanent exhibition outlining main events in Aruban history. Smaller, themed exhibitions are on periodic display. If visiting the museum on a Tuesday, stay in town for the Bonbini Festival.

For those interested in architecture, the Office of Monuments is housed in a landmark building in the Plaza Henriquez next to the new Archeological Museum. There are 24 **restored landmark buildings** within walking distance in downtown Oranjestad. The green *stadhuis*, now housing the City Hall where legal marriages are performed, was the very first building restored by the Bureau.



Culture



© Diane Keijzer

Above: Memorabilia displayed in old *cunucu* house

Throughout the island are some very old houses known as *cas di torto* (house of clay/mud) dating back to the mid-18th century. Walls were first woven out of young flexible branches of kwihi and mangrove wood. The roof was made from tall candle cacti, cut in half, dried and placed with the hollow side up from which the supporting beams were fastened. Next the clay and

different types of dried grass were mixed together with bare feet and smeared on the walls. Houses were painted white with quick lime which was produced by burning different types of coral in lime ovens. To color the walls, the lime was mixed with water and aloe. These houses required continuous maintenance, particularly in the rainy season. Most had two living quarters and a small room with an oven. An aloe vera plant was hung from a beam to ward off evil spirits.

From 1850-1920, houses were built with coral stones replacing the clay and mud. They had the same mustard color made from the pigment found in local sand. Yellow, red and green houses are also recorded, but never blue, as this was considered back luck. From 1920 on, poured concrete became the building material of choice.

Ateliers '89 is a maze of studios and offices, a quiet mecca for the arts housed in a rambling turn-of-the-century school in the suburbs of downtown Oranjestad. The exhibition hall has both permanent displays and changing expositions showcasing local and regional artists. Workshops are taught by established foreign and local artists in various disciplines, each culminating in an exposition open to the public. Ateliers '89 works in close cooperation with a number of art academies in the Netherlands, helping young artists in



The UNOCA collection.

their transition to a Dutch Academy. Many talented local artists who today represent Aruba abroad attended these very workshops.

Aruba's first public national art collection now has a permanent home, a few blocks from the Cas di Cultura in downtown Oranjestad. A bright **UNOCA** sign in front of the building identifies the location. The walls of the sparkling new exposition halls are graced with wonderful works by local and international artists, some who have lived on Aruba for a part of their life. Many of them have local themes depicting Aruba's culture, history and landscape. The STICUSA Aruban Collection dates from 1950 – 1986. The UNOCA collection was born in 1986 with the establishment of the foundation aimed at stimulating cultural development of Aruba. It continues to grow over the years with

Museums & Art Galleries

Museums

Aloe Museum

Pitastraat, Oranjestad
Tel: 588-3222
Website: www.arubaaloe.com
Open Monday thru Friday, 8am-5pm
Tours 9am-5pm

Museo Archeologico

Schelpstraat 42
Tel: 582-8979
Email: archo@setarnet.aw
Call for opening hours

Museo Historico

Fort Zoutman, Oranjestad
Open Monday thru Friday,
9am-12 noon and 1:30pm-4:30pm
Email: museohistoricoarubano@hotmail.com

Art Galleries

Art Studio - Gallery Insight

Paradera Park 215
Tel: 568-9168 / 582-0542
Open Monday thru Friday,
10am-12:30pm, 2pm-5:30pm
Weekends by appointment

Ateliers '89

Dominicanessenstraat 34, Oranjestad
Tel: 588-5776
Cell: 565-4613
Email: elvis@ateliers89.com

The Frame Shop Gallery

Rodolf Arendstraat 18
(around the corner from Topcar)
Tel: 583-1322
Fax: 582-8178
Email: theframeshoparuba@live.com

Elisa Lejuez

Malmokweg
(across from entrance to Tierra del Sol)
Tel: 592-3053
Open Monday - Friday
9 am - 12 noon
Website: www.elisalejuez.com

Studio O Art Salon

Stadionweg, Oranjestad
By appointment only
Tel: 594-5031

Terrafuse

Ciro & Marian Abath
By appointment only
Turibana 14, Noord
Tel: 586-7826

Unoca

Stadionweg 21, Oranjestad
Tel: 583-5681
Open Monday thru Friday,
9 am - 12 noon, 1:30 pm - 5 pm
Email: unoca@setarnet.aw /
Website: www.unocaruba.org

contributions by local artists and private collectors. Books, CDs and DVDs written and produced by Arubans are also on sale. Special events such as courtyard concerts and film screenings are on the horizon.

Several local artists have their own ateliers listed in this section. Appointments can be made by calling in advance.

On-stage of the **Cas di Cultura**, the multi-colored building close to the airport, are



The multi-colored Cas di Cultura building.

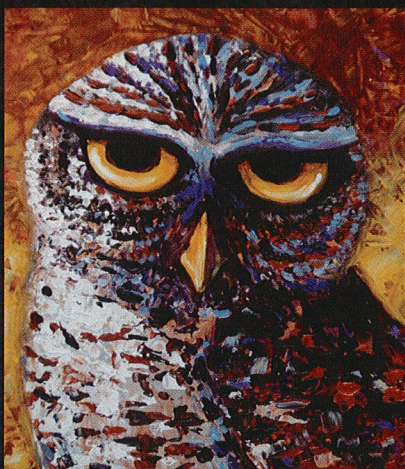
concerts, dance recitals, plays and other entertainment by local and international performers throughout the year. Check with the concierge of your hotel for information.

You can also enjoy some local color by sampling Aruban edibles such as hot sauce, sweets and snacks, as well as spirits and beer. Local stamps, handicrafts, books, art and photography are perfect mementoes of your island stay. ■

Discovering Aruban artists

Aruban artists not only depict the island's pleasing idyllic natural beauty but also explore aspects of life through dramatic symbolism. The paintings of Belinda de Veer and Elvis Tromp illustrate this wide range of subject, goal and technique.

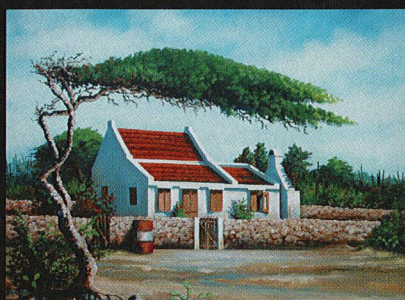
Belinda de Veer was born in Aruba, lived in the US for seven years and earned a doctorate in pharmacy, and then returned. She has followed classes in visual arts and music since childhood. From 1989-93, she attended workshops



Shoco by Elvis Tromp

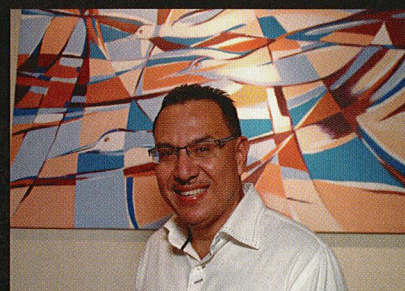
at Ateliers 89 by well-known artists from the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. This acclaimed artist has participated in individual and group exhibitions in Aruba, the US, Curaçao and the Netherlands. Belinda's works are autobiographical, soul searching, emotional and filled with imagery, sometimes dramatic, sometimes delicate. She has explored such themes as the human condition, nature, religion and the essence of womanhood. At

Belinda's 2012 solo exposition at UNOCA Art Gallery entitled "Paradise in the Desert", Sorbonne writer and art critic Dr. Marie-Thérèse Richard Hernandez stated that her paintings "question, confuse and disturb".



Cunucu House by Elvis Tromp

Elvis Tromp is a self-taught Aruban-born artist and graphic designer who captures on canvas images of the traditional Aruba, its people, landscape and culture. He is a respected and



Elvis Tromp

prolific artist who has been painting iconic Aruban scenes for four decades, each with his own personal interpretation. An ever-evolving artist, he continues to search, learn and experiment with abstract elements and color, turning from oil to acrylic as his medium and concentrating on the human figure. He has participated in "Rastro" which travelled through the ABC Islands and "Art in time of crisis" at the Cas di Cultura. His solo exposition entitled "Playing with colours" was held in 2010. In 2012, he participated in exhibitions at La Cabana ("The Four Elements") and the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival. His works have been displayed at many of Aruba's resorts.



Refuge by Belinda de Veer



Belinda de Veer